TEAMBUILDING: A STRATEGIC LEADER IMPERATIVE

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ABSTRACT

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Teambuilding is fundamental to the success of strategic level military leaders. The success or failure of any military unit is contingent upon its ability to effectively function as a team. Leadership Lessons at Division Command Level – 2004 cited teambuilding as a key strategic leader imperative. An Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) - 2001 cited teambuilding components in need of improvement to include command climate, empowerment of subordinates, mentorship, counseling, accountability and feedback. This paper will analyze the aforementioned components of teambuilding and suggest recommendations on how to improve teambuilding efforts to foster effective strategic leadership.

TEAMBUILDING: A STRATEGIC LEADER IMPERATIVE

Successful strategic leaders use their knowledge and skills to structure and lead high performing teams. They perform with unity of purpose and contribute to the creation of strategic vision, develop long-range plans, implement strategy, access resources, and manage the implementation of national policy. Given the nature of the strategic environment and the complexity of both national and global issues, strategic leaders must use teams as they cannot do it alone.[1] As such, teambuilding is of vital importance to the strategic leader and is critical to their success or failure as a strategic leader. In a recent study entitled Leadership Lessons at Division Command Level – 2004, it was cited that "teambuilding, both horizontally and vertically, is crucial to the reliable flow of essential information, and is therefore one of the more critical skills of a Division Commander."[2] The implication of this finding is significant as it identified a critical skill, teambuilding, which may be deficient or lacking in some cases at the senior leader level.

Strategic level teambuilding is fundamental to the success of the military or any organization. The success or failure of any group is contingent upon its ability to function as a team. There are four phases of teambuilding: forming, storming, norming, and performing[3] as well as a multitude of required core leader competencies to include leading others, extending influence beyond the chain of command, leading by example, effectively communicating, developing a positive organizational climate, self preparedness, developing others, and achieving results.[4] These competencies have a variety of components which warrant attention based on the 2001 Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP)[5] which purports that command climate, empowerment of subordinates, mentorship, counseling, and feedback are key factors to improve strategic level teambuilding.

This paper will analyze the phases of teambuilding, discuss the five aforementioned key factors as critical components to improve teambuilding, and cite teambuilding leadership lessons learned as a model for present and future strategic leaders to draw on as the military transforms. Additionally, it will discuss the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory as it relates to the phases of teambuilding as a theoretical construct for effective leadership.

Background

The LMX theory conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers. It is not a leadership theory just from the perspective of the leader such as the trait, skills, and styles approach theory, or from the follower or situation perspective such as situational leadership, contingency theory, and path-

goal theory. Rather LMX takes another approach and incorporates the exchanges of both the leader and follower as a process of leadership. These exchanges can be used for "leadership making,"[6] which emphasizes the importance of high quality exchanges will all members of the team. The theory considers a dyadic or "coupled" relationship between leaders and followers. It further describes how leaders working with teams maintain their position through a series of unspoken, understood, or implied exchange agreements with their members. It was first described in Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975), and later in Graen and Cashman (1975), and Graen (1976).[7] Essentially, the theory purports that when leaders and followers have positive exchanges, they feel better, perform better, and the organization benefits.

Although the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory describes a series of phases which are centered on changes in the dyadic leader-member relationship[8], the changes may also be incorporated into a study of strategic level teambuilding where more than one dyadic relationship is affecting the group. When considering the "team" or the group as the prime entity in an organization, rather than a series of the leader-member relationships, the LMX theory is useful in lending insight to the four phases of teambuilding: forming, storming, norming, and performing.

As leader-member exchange occurs, there are two types of linkages based either on expanded roles and responsibilities or by a formal contract. The first involves a relationship with expanded roles, duties and responsibilities with the "in-group"; the latter with the "out-group." In particular, leaders often have a special relationship with an inner circle of trusted employees, to whom they give high levels of responsibility, decision influence, and access to resources. Members of the in-group pay for their position in that they undoubtedly will work harder, demonstrate more commitment to task objectives, and share more administrative duties than those members of the out-group. They are also expected to be fully committed and loyal to their leaders. Members of the out-group, on the other hand, are not able to influence major decisions and therefore must not demonstrate the level of commitment expected of members of the group. The dynamics of the in and out-groups put constraints upon the leader. Leaders must nurture the relationship with the inner circle. Although the inner circle is trusted with a great amount of power, a leader must remain sensitive to the possibility of mid-level leaders within the in-group either reorienting in accordance with their own agendas or striking out on their own. These relationships, if they are going to happen, start very soon after a person joins the group and follow three stages – the stranger phase, the acquaintance phase, and the mature partnership phase.[9]

<u>Team Development</u>

The three stages of the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory correlate with the four phases of teambuilding: forming, storming, norming, and performing. With the understanding of this correlation, strategic leaders may readily foster and recognize the development of high performance teams. If a strategic leader is aware of these progressive stages and phases, he or she may be able to encourage and facilitate team progress, as well as removing potential barriers which may impede team development.

<u>Phase I</u>. The first stage of the LMX process is referred to as the "stranger phase." During this phase, the members join the team and the leader assesses their abilities and talents. Based on this assessment, the leader may offer the members opportunity to further demonstrate their capabilities. Another significant characteristic of the stranger phase is that it is the stage when both parties discover how the other likes to be treated. The level of respect, interaction, and independence afforded within the group is established.[10]

The first phase of Teambuilding is "forming." Essentially, it is the orientation period. The team is not sure what its task is and members may not know one another. Also, they are unaware of the type of leader they have. At this phase, members want to be told what to do. They tend to respond to the leader's requests and express negative feelings either very politely or privately. During this first phase, the team leader needs to empower the members and assist them in establishing guidelines for accomplishing the task. One way to help do this is by soliciting team members' ideas by asking open-ended questions and complimenting them when appropriate.

Although not specifically addressed in the forming stage of Teambuilding, LMX suggests that the stranger phase may be analogous to the forming stage. Leaders and followers relate within prescribed roles and generally have low quality exchanges similar to out group members as described in LMX theory. Also according to the theory, the subordinate is motivated by self-interest rather then having the interest of the group in mind.[11]

<u>Phase 2</u>. In the second stage of LMX theory known as the "acquaintance phase," the leader and members take part in an unstructured and informal negotiation whereby a role is created for each member and the often unspoken negotiation of benefits and power in return for dedication and loyalty takes place. This unspoken negotiation often includes relationship factors as well as pure work-related responsibilities. During the acquaintance phase, any member who is perceived as similar to the leader is more likely to succeed. Perhaps this explains why mixed gender relationships are less likely to succeed in the work-place than same-gender ones. The reasoning can also be applied to relationships between members of different

races and ethnicity.[12] Trust-building is also very important in this stage; any perceived betrayal can result in the member being relegated to the out-group.

The second phase of teambuilding is "storming." During this phase, team members feel more comfortable expressing their opinions. Additionally, they may challenge the team leader's authority as well as their recommendations. Some members may become dissatisfied and challenge not only what the team is to do and how it is doing it, but also the leader's role and style of leadership. As a leader, one must not try to avoid this phase. A team that does not go through the storming phase will not learn how to deal with conflict. According to Palmer, "teams that never storm are passive, fragmented, and significantly less creative."[13] This phase is also a period where members establish their roles, duties, and responsibilities.

LMX theory suggests that the acquaintance phase is similar to the storming phase of teambuilding. It is a testing period to determine whether the subordinate is interested in taking on additional roles and responsibilities, as well as a leader assessment to provide new challenges.

Phase 3. A pattern of ongoing positive social exchange between the leader and the members becomes established in the third stage of LMX theory known as the "mature partnership phase." In successful mature partnerships, the leader and the members often depend on each other for mutual assistance. They are often tied together with a high degree of reciprocity. For example, during this phase leaders can rely heavily on subordinates to perform tasks well beyond traditional expectations, such as extra assignments or special favors. Subordinate members who are part of a mature relationship are rewarded with extra influence and control, as well as a feeling of mutual respect. Leader-follower relationships which are able to progress into the mature partnership phase are likely to produce positive outcomes for both the individuals and the organization.[14] During this phase, individuals are also likely to recognize the importance of the "greater good" above their own self-interests.

The third phase of teambuilding is "norming." During this phase, members begin to build upon their cumulative experiences for working out problems, and pull together as a cohesive group. This process should result in the team establishing procedures for handling conflicts, decisions, and methods to accomplish the mission or task at hand.[15] During this phase, the team leader needs to continue with activities that empower team members, create trust, provide a vision of what the team needs to achieve.

LMX theory suggests that the beginning stages of the mature partnership phase are similar to the norming phase of teambuilding. Here one can observe that the leader-member relationships are based on a high degree of mutual trust, respect, and dependence on one

another. Members also tend to focus less on their own self interests and have a greater propensity to be concerned about the goals and purpose of the group.

Phase 4. The fourth and final phase of teambuilding is "performing."   Performing is the phase where the payoff should come.[16] In this phase the team has learned to work together and understand one another, defined its tasks, and begins to produce results. At this point, leadership is provided by team members' best suited for the mission. Members have learned how to manage conflict, and contribute their collective efforts to accomplish their objective.

After reaching phase four in teambuilding, the team leader needs to remain cognizant of the resource requirements of the team, as well as the team's needs in skill development, conflict management, trust building, and improvement of attitudes. When changes occur that affect the team's task, membership, or other areas of concern, it is not uncommon for the team to repeat the four-phases.[17]   However, the process should be much smoother after the first iteration. Leaders need to be mindful of the teambuilding phases and stages of the LMX to enhance their organizational effectiveness. LMX theory suggests that the well established mature partnership stage is analogous to the performing stage of teambuilding. Leaders and subordinates are tied together in many productive ways which exceed a traditional hierarchy of merely a working relationship.

The implications of LMX theory are directly related to teambuilding efforts with regard to both subordinates and leaders alike. When subordinate members join a team, they may work hard to join the inner circle and take on more of their share of administrative tasks or duties. Additionally, they may demonstrate unswerving loyalty. From the leader's point of view, it is important to be reasonable and supportive in the challenges given to subordinates, as well as the timing of the demands placed upon them. As a leader, it is also imperative to pick an inner circle with care, and reward it for loyalty and hard work. The commitment and dedication of the inner circle group lies in the balance.

Teambuilding and LMX Lessons Learned

Strategic leaders need to consider the following teambuilding lessons learned. In their book, *The Wisdom of Teams*, Jon Katzenbach and Douglas, provide a set of guidelines that leaders can follow when building teams and assigning tasks.[18] They include the following:
- Carve out teams assignments that tackle specific issues. Team members will be able to connect their efforts that can be linked to organizational change.
- Assign tasks to one or more individuals for later integration by the entire team in subsequent working sessions. This technique causes members to do real work

together beyond full team meetings, allowing team involvement and accountability to
grow outside the context of team meetings.

- Determine team memberships based on skill not position. Skill based membership
relieves the difficult constraint of hierarchically imposed membership that also bring a
political dimension to team meetings.

- Set and follow rules of behavior similar to those used by other teams. Senior
management teams can facilitate a greater degree of mutual accountability by setting
and following the same rule of conduct that help teams at all levels of the organization
provide focus, avoid, and promote openness, and trust.

These lessons learned may offer strategic leaders some tools to build and develop teams. High
performance teams do not exist because leaders merely hope they exist. Rather, they exist
because strategic leaders possess the ability to apply teambuilding skills, as well as the
application of the LMX theory to manage teams and produce high quality results. Additionally,
successful strategic leaders possess the interpersonal skills which are crucial for an
organization to thrive.

Interpersonal Skills of Strategic Leaders

Strategic leaders establish structure, allocate resources, and articulate strategic vision.
Skills required for effective leadership at this level include technical competence and the
integration of joint, combined, and interagency operations, resource allocation, and
management of complex systems; conceptual competence in creating policy and vision; and
interpersonal skills emphasizing consensus building and influencing peers and other policy
makers – both internal and external to the organization. Strategic leaders focus on the long-
range vision for their organization ranging from 5 to 20 years, or more.[19]

Strategic military leaders operate in an environment that is uncertain, where conflict is
unpredictable, and where the capability to defend national interests are influenced by
diplomatic, informational, political, or economic constraints. The environment is volatile,
uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA).[20] Strategic-level leaders require a variety of skills
or strategic-leader competencies to be effective in the VUCA environment in which they
operate. The U.S. Army War College classifies strategic leadership competencies as
conceptual, technical, or interpersonal and has derived six metacompetencies from these three
broad categories: identity, mental agility, cross-cultural savvy, interpersonal maturity, world-
class warrior, and professional astuteness.[21] The six competencies provide focus and content
for development and assessment. They are not all inclusive of what is required to become an

effective strategic-level leader. Furthermore, FM 22-100, the Army's Leadership Manual, identifies a total of forty-one leader competencies at the direct, organizational and strategic levels. At the strategic level, there are twenty-one skills and actions which have been identified. Those which relate to teambuilding include communicating, negotiating, achieving consensus, building staffs, motivating, building, and dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity. [22] Teambuilding requires a myriad of interpersonal skills. Viewing teambuilding through the "lens" of the Leader Member Exchange Theory, the metacompetency of interpersonal maturity comes into focus.

Interpersonal maturity may be defined as the ability to communicate effectively with broad audiences as well as external organizations.[23] One fundamental aspect of interpersonal maturity not specifically addressed in the US Army War College Strategic Leadership Primer is "teambuilding" which possesses a variety of meanings. In general terms, the art of teambuilding will inspire, motivate, and guide others toward a common goal accomplishment. It consistently develops and sustains cooperative working relationships and encourages and facilitates cooperation within the organization and with groups. Lastly it fosters commitment, team spirit, pride, and trust, and develops leadership in others through coaching, mentoring, and rewarding.

The Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) study cites the following critical factors as essential to improve strategic level teambuilding – (1) a healthy command climate; (2) empowerment of subordinates; (3) mentorship; (4) counseling; and (5) feedback. These factors were selected because some Army leaders, in particular, do not do an adequate job in their performance of the aforementioned areas and therefore warrant attention and improvement. Disturbing trends include poor command climates, selfish behaviors, micromanagement, lack of trust between junior and senior leaders, and inadequate counseling and feedback measures and mechanisms.[24] In light of LMX theory and teambuilding, these critical factors require review from strategic leaders. Recommendations are provided herein.

Command Climate

> Our major difficulties emerge not from the character flaws of policymakers, but from a lack of adequate conceptual bases for creating and sustaining a proper climate within our commands.

> —Lieutenant General Walter Ulmer, U.S. Army Ret

Strategic leaders are responsible for maintaining the institutional culture of their organization. They also will have a direct and profound impact on creating, fostering, and nurturing a positive, effective and healthy command climate. Strategic leaders work through staffs and subordinate commanders. Therefore, the command climate they establish and

maintain will have a profound impact on the success of the organization.   The climate will either enhance or inhibit subordinate leaders and staffs to operate effectively. Climate theorists purport that "perceptions influence organizational outcomes and individual behaviors, such as productivity, performance, satisfaction, and personal growth."[25] As such, climate is derived from people's shared perceptions and attitudes of what and how their organization operates on a daily basis. In 1988, Schneider and Reutsh defined organizational climate as the relationship between manager and employee interactions, performance, and effectiveness.[26] This concept is consistent with the prescriptive nature of the LMX theory which reinforces the significance and importance of an effective command climate. LMX theory emphasizes the importance of high quality exchanges between leaders and subordinates. In practice, when leaders and subordinates have positive exchanges, they feel better, perform better, and the organization benefits.

Others theorists have defined climate as "a reflection of how organizational members feel about organizational factors such as job performance expectations, fairness of rewards and punishment, flow of communication, and example set by the organization's leaders."[27] Climate, therefore, is the critical link between the individual and the unit that shapes the effectiveness of their processes and accomplishments. It is a complex construct which can bring an organization to a grinding halt or enable it to be a well oiled machine that is operating at its full potential. It involves effective communication, allocation of responsibilities, rewards, risk-taking, support, performance standards, and accountability.[28]

The connection between teambuilding, organizational climate and unit productivity is highly correlated in industry. [29] In a study of 40 companies, the relationship demonstrated between climate and productivity was very strong.[30] According to *Fortune* magazine, key priorities of the best companies are teamwork, customer focus, and fair treatment of employees, initiative, and innovation. On the contrary, priorities and attitudes in average companies are found to be: "minimizing risk, respecting chain of command, supporting the boss, and making budget."[31] The ADLTP study supports these assertions in the military as well.

Empowerment

> Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity.

> —General George S. Patton Jr.

The second aspect to improve teambuilding is empowerment. The strategic leader needs to empower his subordinates and teams, and hold them accountable for subsequent actions

and mission accomplishment (accountability will be addressed separately as a key component of Teambuilding). The leader can effectively empower his subordinates by training them, providing them adequate resources to get the job done, and getting out of their way. In doing so, a greater level of trust will be established. In turn, this will assist in the development of subordinate and team leadership as well.

The most effective strategic leader is comfortable with empowering subordinates and is able to optimize their ability to complete their roles. As the task complexity increases and the leader's responsibilities involve more persons, building and leading teams and strong interpersonal skills become paramount.[32] Empowerment is evident during the mature partnership phase of LMX theory. In successful mature partnerships, the leader and the members often depend on each other for mutual assistance. They are often tied together with a high degree of reciprocity. Members also tend to focus less on their own self interests and have a greater propensity to be concerned about the goals and purpose of the group.

As John P. Kotter argues in his book *Leading Change*[33], a critical and unfortunately often-missing part of strategic direction is the ability of managers to sufficiently convey their vision to subordinates. This is a prerequisite for empowerment to take place. If subordinates are unclear of the strategic leaders' vision or intent, empowerment will not matter. A properly communicated strategic direction is not only clear to all employees, but it will help them to "see" their own roles in making the achievement of the vision possible. A clear vision may also evoke subordinate determination to have ownership for the mission at hand and thereby accomplish it with alacrity and speed. Lastly, empowerment will be more effective when key metrics such as milestones and timelines are published and known. This, in turn, will foster accountability and keep team members focused and on track. Additionally, the mentorship process can significantly enhance and develop empowerment within subordinates.

Mentoring

> Mentoring plays a major part in developing competent and confident future leaders.

—FM 22-100

Mentorship is a word often used in both the military and civilian lexicon, but it seems to have different meanings for different people. Some consider it a form of counseling, communicating, or learning by example from someone usually senior to them, while others call it leadership. However, it is something beneficial for strategic level leaders of any organization to incorporate mentorship as part of their teambuilding efforts, and is a proven and valuable tool

for leader development. FM 22-100 defines it as "the proactive development of each subordinate through observing, assessing, coaching, teaching, developmental counseling, and evaluating that results in people being treated with fairness and equal opportunity. It is an inclusive process for everyone under a leader's charge." [34]

Mentoring is the presence of caring individuals who provide support, advice, friendship, reinforcement, and constructive examples to help others succeed. A mentor is a person of greater knowledge or wisdoms who shares this experience to help develop abilities of those junior to them, also called protégés. Mentoring helps prepare officers, enlisted, and civilians for increased responsibilities by encouraging job competency, military education, professional development, higher education, and serving the needs of our nation. Mentoring encourages people by promoting communication, and personal and professional development.[35] Mentorship is a critical component of LMX. It is described in that theory as "leadership making."[36] The exchanges between the leader and follower are viewed as a process of leadership. These exchanges can be used for "leadership making," which emphasize the importance of high quality exchanges during the mentoring process.

It is an ill conceived notion that mentoring and the mentoring process is just for a few selected individuals. On the contrary, the strategic leader needs to be proactive in the mentorship of their staff and subordinate leaders. Often times, subordinates may say that a particular person outside of their chain of command is "their mentor." Ideally, that person should be their rater or senior rater. Often times, this is not the case. Mentorship will enhance teambuilding and may be performed in a variety of settings: informally by a supervisor or superior, or formally where an associate is deliberately paired with a mentor. Part of the mentoring process during the stages of teambuilding may require counseling.

Counseling

Counseling is an interpersonal skill essential to effective mentoring.

—FM 22-100

FM 22-100 defines developmental counseling as "subordinate centered communication that produces a plan outlining actions necessary to achieve individual or organizational goals."[37] It is the process of listening, communicating advice, instruction or judgment with the intent of influencing a person's attitude or behavior. It seeks to establish a helping relationship in which the one counseled can express their thoughts and feelings in such a way as to address their own situation, come to terms with a new experience, see their challenge more objectively, and therefore confront it with less apprehension. Counseling is a key component of teambuilding,

and ranges from directive to non-directive, depending on the situation. A combination of both non-directive and directive counseling is referred to as the combined approach.

Non-directive counseling reflects what is said and felt. For example, a strategic leader using the non-directive approach may say the following to a subordinate, "You feel frustrated because you don't meet the approval of your immediate supervisor." On the contrary, directive counseling tells and advises. For example, the same strategic leader using the directive approach may say, "I want you to focus on your part of the project, and don't concern yourself about what other team members are doing." The combined approach would incorporate both techniques.

In the role of counselor, the strategic leader needs to listen and use active and reflective listening skills. By listening the leader helps the subordinate to feel valued and understood. In turn, the subordinate is encouraged to talk and explore about how they feel and why. The subordinate can consider options and examine alternatives and may be able to choose a solution to their challenge. The leader can help the subordinate develop clear objectives and to formulate a specific action plan to support what needs to be done. Therefore, the leader can assist the subordinate find a solution to the impending challenge. Effective strategic leader counseling requires a four step process according to FM 6-22.[38] They are: (1) Identify the need for counseling (event, performance, professional growth); (2) Prepare for counseling (time, place, early notification); (3) Conduct the counseling session (discuss, develop, record); (4) Follow up. The follow up, in essence, is a feedback mechanism and another aspect of strategic level teambuilding in need of improvement.

Feedback

> The primary goal of feedback is development. Open communication fosters trust
> and teamwork which generally lead to empowerment and productivity.

—Rovero and Bullis, 1998

Feedback may be delivered in both a formal or informal manner, and should be focused on a subordinate's performance to established standards. It may be delivered in a variety of ways. In an informal manner, providing feedback is not about filling out forms, writing a performance appraisal, or completing an officer efficiency report. The most valuable kinds of feedback are the daily interactions between leaders and their people - interactions that can't be captured on paper.[39] These interactions may enable the leader to make the subordinate's job easier or find out what may be in the way of accomplishing the job. It is important to note that feedback can be delivered in two ways – from leader to subordinate and vice-versa. The

feedback process is also consistent with the prescriptive nature of the LMX. As with feedback, the LMX theory conceptualizes leadership as a process that is centered on the interactions between leaders and followers.

Another key point regarding feedback is that feedback delayed is feedback denied. In his book entitled FAST Feedback (the acronym stands for "frequent, accurate, specific, timely"), Bruce Tulgan interviewed hundreds of managers and employees. One of the most common complaints, he stated, is that feedback takes place too long after the performance being critiqued has occurred. [40] As such, it may not be effective. The person may be unaware of what the feedback relates to, as well as an increase in the time to achieve the desired behavior.

In a formal manner, assessment of job performance is shared with employees being appraised through one of several primary methods of performance appraisals. Elements in performance appraisal methods are tailored to the organization's employees, jobs, and structure. They include objective criteria for measuring employee performance and ratings that summarize how well the employee is doing. Successful appraisal methods have clearly defined and explicitly communicated standards or expectations to provide feedback of employee performance on the job.

In accordance with FM 22-100, leaders need to provide straightforward feedback to their subordinates, articulate their strengths and weaknesses, and let them know specifically how they can improve.[41] Leader assessment should be a positive experience that subordinates see as an opportunity to improve, as well as the prospect to tap into the leaders experience and knowledge for their benefit. Also, leader assessment on subordinate performance will not be productive unless it includes a plan of action designed to correct weaknesses and sustain strengths. Feedbacks as well as the four other factors (a healthy command climate, empowerment of subordinates, mentorship, and counseling) are areas in need of improvement for strategic level teambuilding.

Conclusion

Army transformation can greatly benefit from teambuilding, a process fundamental to the success of any military or civilian organization. The U.S. Army has a long and proud tradition of training leadership, yet it still needs to do a better job of training strategic level leaders to build teams more effectively. The Leadership Lessons at Division Command Level – 2004 illustrates this requirement. Perhaps some type of teambuilding refresher training is necessary at the general officer and/or strategic leader level; this training could be administered during the Capstone Exercise required for all flag officers. The Capstone Exercise is a six-week course for

newly-selected flag and general officers, sponsored by the National Defense University (NDU) at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. and executed by U.S. Joint Forces Command's (USJFCOM) Joint Warfighting Center in Suffolk, Virginia.[42] Additionally, the practical methods of integrating Assistant Division Commanders, Chiefs of Staff, and the key officers in attached units into the headquarters operation deserve attention. The solution requires both technical (staff organization, time management, information flow) as well as interpersonal skill development (trust development, self-management, listening) that is not beyond the theoretical and logistical capability of the existing educational systems.[43]

With respect to teambuilding, the military would do well to reference (at least initially) examples from the private sector. Yet looking to leaders like Jack Welch, former CEO for General Electric, and Warren Buffett, a Stock Market guru and second richest man in the world[44], for teambuilding advice is nothing ground-shaking or novel. The military of course is a different type of organization than any Fortune 500 company. It has different goals, different constraints, a different culture, and certainly a greater sense consequence. At the same time however, the military closely resembles private organizations as it relies on its human employees—*its Soldiers, Sailors, Airman, Marines, and Coast Guardsman*—for making it the organization it is. For that reason, this research effort to cite teambuilding as a strategic leader imperative is a good first step. The difficulty of this matter however lies in devising, monitoring, and instituting teambuilding programs. Though difficult to institute and make concrete, can the military afford to stay its present course and not place greater emphasis on teambuilding fundamentals at the strategic level?

Endnotes

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